

181st Transportation Battalion



*181st Transportation Battalion unit crest (l) and coat of arms (r)
Mouseover each for a description*

The 181st Transportation Battalion was originally constituted on 23 February 1943 in the Army of the United States as Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 3rd Battalion 520th Quartermaster Truck Regiment. It was activated on 25 June 1943 at Camp Ellis, Illinois. The unit was reorganized and redesignated on 25 January 1944 as Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 181st Quartermaster Battalion (Mobile) and its three lettered companies, G, H and I, were redesignated the 4007th, 4008th, and 4009th. The 181st supported the breakout from Normandy and earned served in five World War II campaigns: Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland, Ardennes-Alsace, and Central Europe. It was then inactivated in Germany on 25 June 1946.

After World War II, truck units were given to the Transportation Corps. While on the inactive status, the 181st Transportation Battalion was converted and redesignated on 1 August 1946 as Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 181st Transportation Corps Truck Battalion. It was allotted to the Regular Army and redesignated on 3 December 1954 as Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 181st Transportation Battalion (Truck).

After World War II, Russia occupied the East European nations with the idea of establishing buffer countries between it and democratic Europe. The constant threat of war between the Soviet Union and Western Europe created what was then known as the “Cold War.” In preparation for that the United States and European nations created the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in April 1949. The US Army established a comprehensive Communication Zone in France to support the defense of West Germany

from an attack by the Soviet block armies. This COMZ included a line of communication that stretched from the ports of Northern France to Germany and supply depots scattered throughout France.

Line Haul Europe

In 1949, Russia, once a WWII Allies of the United States, England and France, detonated its first nuclear bomb and began the Cold War. The next year, Communist North Korea invaded South Korea, thus escalating the tension between Communism and Pro-Democracy countries. The US Army's mission in Europe changed from an occupation of war torn Germany, but containment of any further expansion of the Soviet Union in Europe. Consequently, the constant threat of war required a line haul system in Europe that began along the northern coast of France and stretched into Germany. Three truck battalions relayed cargo from the French ports through trailer transfer points (TTP) in the Communication Zone (COMZ) to the TTP in Mannheim, Germany where trucks of the Seventh Army pushed the cargo to its customers.

The 181st Transportation Battalion was activated in Germany on 28 January 1955 to replace the 154th Transportation Battalion (PA NG), which had been ordered to Federal service back in 1950, at the outbreak of the Cold War, and sent to Germany in October 1951. The 154th had responsibility for the operation of a trailer transfer point (TTP) and marshalling yard at Turley Barracks in Mannheim. The newly activated 181st assumed responsibility for the 154th Battalion's mission after it was sent back to Pennsylvania.¹ The 181st Trans Battalion fell under the responsibility of the 37th Transportation Command in direct support of Headquarters, United States Army, Europe (USEURAR) and Seventh Army where it provided highway transportation.

In 1956, the 181st Battalion, commanded by LTC Elmore P. Moore, contained the following units:

- HHD, 181st Transportation Battalion
- 84th Transportation Company (Medium Truck)
- 108th Transportation Company (Light Truck)
- 503rd Transportation Company (Light Truck)
- 519th Transportation Company (Car)

The 84th Transportation Company had 60 U7144T Autocar 4-5 ton 4X4 cab over engine tractors with single-axle box trailers. In the event of war, the 84th would drive to Patton Barracks in Heidelberg, load USAREUR headquarters and head for the safety of France. Its assembly area was the race track at Hockenheim, Germany.²

On 15 May 1956, the 181st Battalion was attached to Seventh Army and placed under the operational control of the 10th Transportation Group for Project Modern Army Supply

¹ "154th Transportation Battalion," US Army in Germany,

http://www.usarmygermany.com/Sont.htm?http&&www.usarmygermany.com/units/SUPCOM%20Units/USAREUR_181st%20Trans%20Bn.htm

² Leslie Herd email to US Army in Germany, "181st Transportation Battalion," US Army in Germany.

System (MASS) and its four original companies were detached and assigned to COMZ. The 181st picked up the 41st, 51st and 342nd Light Truck Companies and the 40th Medium Truck (POL) Company. Project MASS began in July and was designed to speed up the delivery of repair and replacement parts to front line units through electronic communication. When a unit in the field needed a spare part or replacement engine, a request was transmitted to the Seventh Army stock control center, which determined in a matter of minutes if the part was in Europe. If not, Seventh Army immediately sent a TWX sent to the Overseas Supply Agency (OSA) in the US where the part was obtained. Requested items were categorized according to their need. Code 1 items were shipped back to Europe by plane. Receipt of Code 2 items took a minimum of 20 days from the time of request to the time of arrival. Code 3 items with no urgency involved took at least 30 days to arrive in country by ship. Once in Europe, the trucks of the 181st delivered the spare parts to the units. The three Light Truck Companies had the new M34 2 ½-ton cargo trucks. Each truck had a round red sign on the front with the letters MASS allowing the drivers use of the post dining facilities and support from any installation. Formerly, the bulk stockage of these items resulted in the need for large warehouse space and a certain amount of loss of equipment through deterioration. The former supply system required between 30 days to three months from the time of request to the receipt of a spare part. Under the MASS system, the time element was reduced to as much as 10 days but never extended one month.³

While the 84th Trans Company was assigned to COMZ, it received 60 new M52 6x6 tractors. The companies were reassigned back to USAREUR in 1957.⁴

The battalion was redesignated as Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 181st Transportation Battalion on 20 February 1959. Commanded by MAJ Robert W. Shidier, the Battalion provided command and control for the following:

- 41st Transportation Company (Light Truck)
- 51st Transportation Company (Light Truck)
- 590th Transportation Company (Light Truck)

The Battalion continued to participate in Project MASS through 15 November 1959 when the concept became a normal supply of the Army. Normal driving hours were limited to daytime, but Blue Streak orders for priority items required the drivers to drive around the clock. There were also three daily aerial deliveries of Blue Streak items.⁵

On 15 January 1962, the Battalion was detached from the 10th Transportation Group and attached to the 48th Transportation Group continuing with its mission of highway transport of persons and equipment. In 1968, the Battalion was assigned to V Corps Support Command to support the transportation requirements for V Corps. In 1974, V Corps Support Command (COSCOM) was reorganized as 3rd Support Command, later 3rd COSCOM.

³ “Army Truckers Keep Project MASS Rolling,” *Stars & Stripes*, December 21, 1956, 181st Transportation Battalion, US Army in Germany.

⁴ Leslie Herd email to US Army in Germany, “181st Transportation Battalion,” US Army in Germany.

⁵ *Stars & Stripes*, July 16, 1959, 181st Transportation Battalion, US Army in Germany.

In 1970, the 181st Battalion provided command and control for the following:

- 41st Transportation Company (Light/Medium Truck)
- 51st Transportation Company (Medium Truck)
- 590th Transportation Company (Light/Medium Truck)
- 340th Quartermaster Detachment (Parachute)

The 181st received its missions from 3rd COSCOM in Frankfurt and TASCOC's Central Highway Operations Center (CHOC) in Kaiserslautern. The CHOC notified the Battalion Operations Section of the missions for the next day. The Operations Section then decided on which units would provide the trucks for each mission. Once a truck company received its assigned missions, it selected the drivers. The missions include hauling everything from spare parts, clothing, rations, and ammo to small tracked vehicles. Three 2½-ton trucks from the 41st Light/Medium Truck Company ran a high priority express service, Monday through Friday, out of the Kaiserslautern Army Depot. This door-to-door service delivered urgently needed parts and supplies to units along routes that go to Munich, Nurnberg and Giessen. The 340th QM Det provided maintenance support for air equipment, which included almost 900 emergency type parachutes for all Army aircraft in V Corps and the Martin-Baker ejection seats used on the Mohawk aircraft.⁶

A Light/Medium Truck Company had M34 2 ½-ton cargo trucks and M52 5-ton tractors (stake and platform). The 3rd Squad of the 3rd Platoon of the 590th Light/Medium Truck Company drove the eight to ten 5-ton tractors and never had a shortage of missions. They were considered the elite squad. They still had the war-time mission of moving the IG Headquarters at Frankfurt out of Germany.⁷

In 1990, the 181st Battalion included the following units:

- 2nd Transportation Company (Heavy Truck)
- 40th Transportation Company (POL)
- 41st Transportation Company (Medium Truck)
- 51st Transportation Company (Medium Truck)
- 590th Transportation Company (Light/Medium Truck)
- Headquarters Company, Allied Command Europe (ACE) Mobile Force (Land)

In August 1990, the Iraqi Army invaded Kuwait and the United States began deploying forces to Saudi Arabia to protect any further aggression known as Operation Desert Shield. The 41st and 51st Medium Companies retrograded 16,000 short tons of ammunition from the ammunition storage areas to the railheads for further movement to northern ports. The 590th Medium Company was first alerted to deploy to Saudi Arabia in November. The battalion rallied around the 590th. As there were critical shortages of drivers, the battalion had to cross level dozens of drivers and other key personnel from other companies to bring the 590th up to the authorized level. Most volunteered. The 51st was assigned as the Trucker Buddies of the 590th. Each level of the organization provided

⁶ *Stars & Stripes*, August 4, 1970, 181st Transportation Battalion, US Army in Germany.

⁷ James A. Rung email to US Army Europe, 181st Transportation Battalion, US Army in Germany.

family support for its counterpart in the deploying unit. The 590th deployed from Rhien Main Air Force Base on 8 December.

The 181st Battalion received the mission to establish a Departure Airfield Control Group (DACG) at Stuttgart Army Airfield on 20 November, the day before Thanksgiving. Headquarters assigned that mission to the 40th POL Company. It and the 13th Chemical Company provided command and control and the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment provided a platoon for baggage handling. The 575th Personnel Service Company provided the expertise for checking and recording manifests for each flight. The DACG set up operations in an empty motor pool. Four huge tents with flooring, doors, heat and light to provide sleeping quarters for as many as many as 800 soldiers in case of delays. Two tents were filled with tables and benches and a sixth was turned into a recreation center, manned by the USO, for deploying troops. This was winter in Germany. The DACG operated for six weeks and deployed more than 7,000 soldiers to Saudi Arabia.

A week after the 590th deployed, the 181st was notified to deploy the 2nd Heavy Company located at Friedberg, north of Frankfurt. The 10 to 14 days of preparation time was reduced to 6 days to be ready to deploy. Non mission capable HETs and HET trailers were repaired or swapped. The company also received new 5-ton trucks. Just before Christmas the 2nd Heavy loaded their vehicles on railcars in Friedberg and the personnel boarded two Civil Reserve Air Fleet (CRAF) aircraft at Stuttgart. The 181st deployed two of its five truck companies to Desert Shield/Storm.

When they returned in July their equipment was in extraordinarily poor shape. About five to seven tractors per company required General Support level rebuild and many of the Heavy Equipment Transporters (HETs) (M747) had cracked frames due to overload during cross country moves. The 181st organized its trucks and trailers into a Capable Corps.

After Desert Storm, the 181st picked up the 11th Heavy and the 515th POL Truck Companies. During Desert Storm, the 11th Heavy had moved tracked vehicles for the flank attack, hauled prisoners ammunition and latrines. The 515th POL hauled 11 million gallons of fuel in direct support of the 3rd Armored Division.

In 1992, the 181st Battalion comprised the following:

- 2nd Transportation Company (Heavy Truck) with M911s at Friedberg
- 11th Transportation Company (Heavy Truck) with M911s at Boelingen
- 515th Transportation Company (POL) with M915s at Ludwigsburg
- 40th Transportation Company (POL) with M931s (tactical tractors)
- 41st Transportation Company (Medium Truck) with M915s
- 51st Transportation Company (Medium Truck) with M915s
- 590th Transportation Company (Medium Truck) with M915s and M923A2s at Mannheim
- Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Allied Command Europe (ACE)
- Mobile Force (Land) at Mannheim.

Operation Joint Endeavor, Bosnia

The peace dividend of winning the Cold War was paid for by the US Army. Since the Soviet Union, which was falling apart, no longer posed a threat across the border, transportation in Europe was scaled down to just what it needed to supply the US Army units still active. The 590th Transportation Company was inactivated on 15 May 1993 and the 11th Transportation Company was inactivated on 15 September 1995. The remaining companies reshuffled into the two remaining truck battalions, the 28th and the 181st Battalions. The 2nd Transportation Company (HET) was transferred to the Fort Carson, Colorado, under the 68th Corps Support Battalion and the 40th Transportation Company (POL) moved to Fort Lewis, Washington, with the 4th Transportation Battalion, which was redesignated the 44th Corps Support Battalion. The V Corps only had one medium truck company left, the 41st Transportation Company, which was also inactivated in September 1995. On 16 September 1994, the 377th HET was transferred to the V Corps and assigned under the 181st Transportation Battalion. By 1995, the 51st Transportation Company was in the process of turning in its M915s for the M1075 Palletized Loading System (PLS) Truck and the 377th HET Company was turning in its M911/M747 HETs for the newer M1070/M1000 HETs tractor and trailer combination.

By late 1995, the 181st Transportation Battalion, commanded by LTC Garey Heumhphreus, then provided command and control for three truck companies:

- 51st Transportation Company (Pallet Load System)

- 515th Transportation Company (POL)

- 377th Transportation Company (Heavy Equipment Trailer)

In 1991, the former Republic of Yugoslavia had disintegrated into civil war between the different ethnic groups. After four years of fighting, the Bosnian Serb, Croat, and Muslim ethnic factions in Bosnia-Herzegovina were ready to cease hostilities. They agreed to terms of a cease-fire at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio, on November 21, 1995 and signed the Dayton Peace Accords in Paris on December 14, 1995. After the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords, NATO-led forces would deploy into the former Yugoslav republic to implement the peace plan. The two remaining transportation battalions would have to support that operation. They fell under the control of the Commander for Support (C-SPT) of the Implementation Force (IFOR).

In November 1995, LTC Roger M. Moore assumed command of the Battalion just weeks before the 181st Battalion deployed to Hungary. On 9 December 1995, the advance party of the 515th Transportation Company deployed to Kaposvar, Hungary to establish the Intermediate Staging Base (ISB). On 11 December, the first of four convoys of the 181st Transportation Battalion road marched to the ISB. The ISB would become the trailer transfer point between the 28th and 181st Battalions and the drop off point for the railroad. The last departed on 19 December and each convoy took three days to reach its destination almost 1,000 miles from Mannheim. Due to its lack of a medium cargo truck company, the 28th Battalion attached its 70th Medium Truck Company and 260th Trailer

Transfer Company to the 181st Battalion at the ISB. This created a problem as the 181st Battalion no longer had the parts on their MTOE to support the medium truck company. The 70th Medium Truck Company had to rely entirely on the 28th Battalion, over 1,000 miles away, for this support.

The 181st Battalion cut the 51st PLS Company, minus one platoon, to the 16th Corps Support Group based at Zupanja, Croatia, labeled Tactical Assembly Area HARMON, to move containerized cargo to the engineers rebuild the destroyed bridge across the Sava River that formed a natural border between Croatia and Bosnia. The 70th Medium Truck and 377th HET shuttled the engineers bridging equipment from the ISB to TAA HARMON, tortuous 12-hour journey through the mountains. Until that land line of communication extended into Bosnia, the IFOR troops had to rely on an air line of communication.

The 3rd Corps Support Command proposed to move the 1st Armored Division with a provisional HET company. The 377th HET Company also received the augmentation with additional HET units. A platoon from B/123rd Main Support Battalion (MSB) and a platoon from B/703rd MSB formed a provisional company and the commercial contract company Kellogg, Brown and Root (KBR) formed a third company of what would become Task Force HET, under the command of the 181st Battalion executive officer, MAJ James P. Herson, Jr. However, the hasty nature in which the units were thrown together and insufficient resources, the task force proved untenable and was disbanded.

From January through February 1996, the 181st Battalion steadily moved the IFOR from the ISB to TAA HARMON. 85 to 95 percent of the available trucks were on the road. The drivers drove 18-hour days for 60 days straight through the worst Balkan winter since World War II. The 109th Transportation Company arrived at the ISB from the 28th Battalion in January to deliver Class IV construction materials to the engineers. Once the Reception, Staging Onward Movement, and Integration (RSO&I) were completed, then the operational tempo dropped to 50 to 60 percent asset use during the sustainment phase.

In March, the 181st Battalion deployed south and fall under the control of the 16th Corps Support Group. The 515th POL and part of the 377th HET moved to Slavonski Brod in Croatia to help close out TAA HARMON. The battalion headquarters with the 51st PLS and rest of the 377th HET moved to base Camp Tampa and Angela in Bosnia, south of Tuzla. On 15 February, the 28th Battalion deployed half of its headquarters to the ISB to provide command and control for that operation. By the completion of deploying the 1st Armored Division, the 377th HET was equipped with PLS systems and B/701st MSB was attached to the 28th Battalion. A platoon of the 377th HET also remained at the shrinking ISB.

The 181st Battalion had played a key role in the insertion, sustainment and redeployment of Task Force Eagle. For its effort in Eastern Europe, the 181st Battalion received the Army Superior Unit Award.

In September 1998 the 377th HET was relocated to Grafenwohr, Germany and then moved again on 30 November 2001 to Mannheim, Germany.

Headquarters Company, AMF (L) provided command and control, security, transportation and logistical support to the commander and staff of Headquarters AMF (L). Created in 1960, AMF (L) was a NATO, multi-national organization that was permanently at a very high readiness state to deploy anywhere on short notice within the NATO European boundaries. It could carry out war fighting operations or operations other than war, such as peacekeeping. On 19 July 2002, based upon the recommendation of NATO's Military Authorities, the Defense Planning Committee approved the disbandment of AMF (L).

In 2002 the 181st Transportation Battalion, under the command of LTC Michael MacNeil, had control of the following:

- 11th Transportation Company (Heavy Equipment Trailer)
- 41st Transportation Company (Pallet Load System)
- 51st Transportation Company (Pallet Load System)
- 377th Transportation Company (Heavy Equipment Trailer)
- 515th Transportation Company (POL)

In 2002, BG Charles Fletcher, Commander of the 3rd COSCOM, wanted the 41st PLS and 377th HET to fall under the control of local battalion leadership, at Vilseck, Germany. He had the 377th HET and the 11th HET, at Mannheim, switch flags, because the 377th HET had the longest historical relationship with the 181st Battalion. He then took the 18th Corps Support Battalion out of 16th Corps Support Group and relocated the 18th to Grafenwohr under the 7th CSG. The 18th CSB assumed control of the 11th HET and 41st PLS along with other non-transportation companies.

Operation Iraqi Freedom

“181 Transportation Battalion Operation Iraqi Freedom; Historical Summary of Operations as of 31 Dec 03,” by MAJ Cliff M. Serwe, XO, 181st Trans Bn, *Transportation Corps Professional Bulletin*.

Phase I Predeployment

The 181st Transportation Battalion is stationed in Mannheim, Germany. LTC Charles F. Maskell assumed command in Jun, 02 and began training the unit for an anticipated war in Iraq. The battalion conducted four significant training events that prepared the unit for war.

377th Trans Co (HET) deployed 20 soldiers and a platoon leader to Kuwait on four separate 30-40 day deployments between Jul and Nov 02. Their primary mission was supporting the download of Army prepositioned equipment vessels, and the movement of Heavy Equipment Transporters and oversized and outsized equipment from the sea port to Camp Doha and Camp Arifjan, which was still under construction at the time. The

missions exposed the soldiers to the area of operations, provided outstanding convoy and land navigation training, and gave them a chance to acclimatize to the desert. In Nov, the battalion S3, two NCOs, and a safety officer deployed to Kuwait for ten days, and led the 377th soldiers through a desert convoy live fire at the Udairi Range Complex, which was the 3D COSCOM's first desert live fire training event at that time. Other units followed that example by conducting follow-on live fire exercises.

Another critical training event was a deployment to V Corps' capstone deep-strike attack aviation exercise in Poland, Victory Strike III. 181 Trans deployed a large portion of the 515th Trans Co (POL), two platoons from the 51st Trans Co (PLS) and the battalion headquarters during Sep and Oct of 2002. The battalion focused on its battle task by deploying via convoy from Germany to Poland, providing C2 over bulk petroleum distribution and critical Class IX movements, and then redeploying via convoy back to Germany. We also showcased the Army's experimental High Speed Sealift Vessel (HSV) by moving one squad of the 515th Trans Co between Bremerhaven, Germany and Szechzin, Poland.

The third significant collective training event followed closely on the heels of our return from Poland. 51st Trans Co (PLS) overcame all of the training distracters and other challenges to deploy the entire company for one month of extensive tactical training at the Combined Maneuver Training Center (CMTC) at Hohenfels, Germany. The unit simultaneously supported a brigade as it conducted gunnery training and conducted exhaustive company collective training. The skills developed during that month paid off handsomely during Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) when 51st Trans Co was one of two V Corps PLS truck companies available for the attack into Iraq.

After we redeployed from Poland, V Corps identified 515th Trans Co (POL) as its top priority CSS unit for deployment to Kuwait. Colonel Joe Brown, commander of the 16th Corps Support Group directed a group wide Road to Readiness Review to ensure units were properly resourced for desert combat operations. Unit commanders conducted detailed readiness assessments, identified and resolved training and materiel shortfalls, and conducted an exhaustive four hour briefing to Colonel Brown upon completion of the unit-level review. This process ensured company commanders and soldiers at the lowest level were resourced and trained for success in Iraq.

Phase II. RSOI and Pre-G Day

181 Trans Bn headquarters deployed to Kuwait in Jan 03 in order to support OIF. The rest of the battalion deployed in January and February. Our first mission was running all of V Corps' Reception Staging & Onward Movement camps (Camps New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Udairi). We met that challenge with none of our organic equipment, then handed the mission off to the CONUS based reserve element of 19th Support Center in order to prepare for war. The battalion commander, LTC Chuck Maskell and the S3 were the only 181 personnel involved in planning for the combat mission, while the rest of our company commanders and soldiers were task organized under the 19th SC to run the camps until they could get established. We finally pulled the

majority of our Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment soldiers from running Camp Virginia about 1 Mar 03, and moved to assembly areas under the command and control of the 24th Corps Support Group.

We established our tactical operations center using tents, generators and vehicles borrowed from other units. We prepared for the pending G-Day (ground attack day) and simultaneously integrated the 418th Trans Co (5 K Petroleum Tankers) from Fort Hood, and the 296th Trans Co (5 K Petroleum Tankers), a Reserve unit from Mississippi. We split the battalion and sent two POL companies (296th and 418th) in direct support of 1st Brigade, 3D Infantry Division in the North. Our HHD moved with the 2d Bde, 3ID on the southern axis of advance behind 3-7 Cavalry Squadron. The 377th Trans Co and 11th Trans Co (each consist of 1/2 of a Super HET Company) were task organized down to combat units, engineers and intelligence units (to move UAVs). The 51st Trans Co (PLS) ran continuous operations in the days prior to G-Day in order to feed the 3ID and all of the Corps separate brigades as they prepared for combat in their attack positions along the Iraqi border. On G-Day, they hauled critical unit equipment and sustainment stocks for the 24th CSG, such as water and fuel bag equipment. Our home station POL unit, the 515th Trans Co did not have its trucks yet, so they remained in Kuwait for a few days until their equipment arrived. They immediately began supporting the 3ID push to Baghdad.

We received our unit equipment and containers a few hours before we moved to the attack positions (48 hours prior to the attack). We supported the attack without most of our critical equipment, such as NBC detection and decontamination equipment, SINCGARS radios, PLGRs, maps, night vision goggles, and satellite communications systems (in Europe, every one of our trucks had a messaging system, but we did not receive the containers they were in prior to the attack. Believe me when I tell you it wasn't for lack of trying to get our stuff).

Phase III. Attack to May 3.

We had three critical tasks for G-Day - G+2. Establish convoy support center Peterbilt in the vicinity of As Samawah, conduct a division refuel (5 K to HMMT tanker) Northwest of As Samawah, and provide task organized HETs and PLS trucks to move critical combat engineer equipment and in the case of the PLS, corps support battalion equipment and stocks. The Northern task force of 181 Trans crossed the berm into Iraq integrated into the Forward Support Battalion from 1st BCT. The FSB included over 600 vehicles. We began our movement approximately 1000 hours, and drove continuously through that day, the night, and the next day we stopped in the vicinity of Tallil Air Base, the first objective of the lead brigade. The mission was going well, so our requirement to conduct the divisional refuel at As Samawah moved earlier. We task organized to move with the two lead battalion task forces of the lead brigade (at this point, 1BCT). The battalion S3 led one group of twenty tankers along Highway 8 along the western bank of the Euphrates. The commander of the supply company in Forward Support Battalion led another group of twenty tankers.

The battle for As Samawah did not go well, and the group with the S3 spent the night along the road just southeast of the city as the task force tried to fight through. Early the next morning, we moved through As Samawah with the 3ID Tactical Command Post that was held up on the same stretch of road. We peeled off on the far side of the city, and stopped to check if the battalion headquarters beat us to the tentative location of CSC Peterbilt on the west side of the city. We found a troop from the 3-7 CAV actively engaged in a fight for a key bridge across the Euphrates, Kiowa warriors were attacking targets within 1 kilometer, and the tentative site for the CSC was unsuitable due to unexploded ordnance and the tactical situation. We moved to the tentative site for the divisional refuel operation. All of the terrain in the area was inaccessible due to elevated roadways and muddy terrain. We set up the tankers along the road that connected the two Alternate Supply Routes in the area, and effectively choked off traffic in order to conduct the refuel. Although the refuel limited traffic flow, there were no better alternatives, and the 3ID Assistant Division Commander for Support spent a large part of the day prioritizing the refuel of divisional tankers and movement of divisional units along the ROUTE ROVERS (BOSTON). The fuel tankers were empty approximately 1400 hours, and we prepared to move south along the ROVERS to get fuel in the vicinity of Tallil Air Base. Just as we prepped to move, we were attacked by mortar fire, and one soldier from 296th Trans Co was MEDEVACd as our first casualty of the war. She had shrapnel in her knee, but her outlook for recovery was good.

While the line companies and the S-3 were task organized to travel North with different units, the battalion headquarters with attached elements moved as part of the 2d BCT, 3ID march column. The battalion headquarters along with an attached Logistics Task Force (to provide support at CSC Peterbilt), Signal Node Center, Counter Intelligence Section, and Movement Control Team crossed the Line of Departure at approximately H+5 on G Day. The battalion headquarters traveled along the Southern route for 36 continuous hours, arriving just south of As Samawah at dusk on 22 March. The battalion commander linked up with the 2d BCT TAC and was informed that the fight for As Samawah was still on and it would be several hours before the 3-7 CAV, who controlled the battle space, would allow the 181st to move towards the CSC. Later that night, the 3-7 CAV squadron commander relayed through the 2d BCT TAC that he wanted the 181st to wait until daylight to move to the CSC. As a result, the headquarters conducted a night move with NVGs to the 3-7 CAV field trains. At dawn, the battalion was informed by the 2d BCT that we would be guided to the CSC by a representative from the Cavalry Squadron. Later, the 181st was granted permission to move unescorted to the CSC site (a civilian cement factory). As the battalion headquarters approached the factory, it linked up with the battalion S-3. BG Weber from the 3d ID informed the 181st Battalion Commander that the proposed CSC site was unusable due to battle damage and the width of the roads in the factory. LTC Maskell quickly moved to find alternate terrain upon which to establish CSC Peterbilt. He picked a spot about 10 KM Northwest of the original site, and quickly established the TOC and a refuel site in order to provide fuel, one MRE and water to each convoy moving through.

During these initial days of the war, the 377th Trans Co was our most forward deployed force. They were task organized all across the 3ID providing critical movement of

combat engineer equipment in direct support of the maneuver forces. The 11th Trans Co was primarily supporting the follow-on V Corps separate brigades.

Within a few days, the 3BCT commander responsible for local security in our area arrived at our CSC and warned LTC Maskell that an attack by the Fedayeen Saddam was imminent. As the senior tactical commander in the area, he ordered the battalion to relocate the CSC. We tore down the battalion TOC and the entire CSC within three hours, and co-located with 3BCT's Forward Support Battalion about 10 KM Northwest of our location. This was complicated by the fact that most of the rest of the battalion had finally arrived after completing their G-day and follow on missions. There were also approximately 50 "customer" vehicles that were refueling at the CSC when the battalion was given the order. After getting everyone moved out of the old location, the battalion CSM, Communications NCOIC, and several other senior NCOs returned to the old CSC to post a sign to warn incoming convoys not to stop at the now deserted CSC.

The next morning, we received a message to move the battalion to Logistics Support Area Bushmaster. That was the large, furthest forward LSA designed to support the 3ID attack through the Karbala Gap and through the destruction of the Republican Guard's Media Division. We were ordered to report to the 3D Corps Support Command Commanding General, BG Fletcher. He tasked us to set up a CSC to provide support for trucks as they arrived at that distant node, and gave us the additional mission of ensuring the rapid turnaround of all sustainment convoys, regardless of whether or not they were 181 Trans units.

To accomplish this, the S3 remained with the 3 COSCOM Assault Command Post (ACP) in Bushmaster, while the 181 Trans set up their TOC a few kilometers away. At this point the battalion controlled 5 POL transportation companies, one PLS company and the two HET companies.

The battalion's primary mission was to fill the fuel bag farm on Bushmaster and provide support to the 101st Airborne Division's various Forward Arm and Refuel Points, and moving food and ammo for the 3ID. However, the HETs were still working in DS to various 3ID and Corps separate units, and they would be attached to various units for days at a time. Because of the scarcity of ITV devices, it was very difficult to track these vehicles. We had also lost a significant number of fuel tankers along the cross-country movement on G-Day-G+2. While the soldiers had been recovered, the tankers (mostly old M818s remained mired along the route). The HETs were moving critical combat engineer assets, as well as tanks and Bradleys. A small number of trucks from the 377th Trans were in direct support to a special operations task force that had the mission to take down key members of the regime, and they drove through the firefights on the streets of Baghdad in late March and early April. They also moved equipment to BIAP and were there during many of the early counter attacks on BIAP.

Within a few weeks, we jumped again to LSA Dogwood, which was the site of the 3ID Division Rear Headquarters and the 24th CSG headquarters. While there, we supported the fuel bag farm on Dogwood, a bag farm on recently established Forward Logistics Base

ELM (101st Airborne Division) just south of Baghdad. As the 3ID was fighting for the city, the 181 Trans Bn was hauling critical fuel to support the fight. Many missions involved arduous trips to the bag farm near Tallil Air Base, because the theater and other Corps POL units could not push adequate amounts of fuel to the bags on Dogwood. There was no mistaking the importance of the mission as we were located on the same map sheet as the United States Government's primary objective, Baghdad.

The 51st Trans Co continued to provide critically short dry cargo transport to the most forward deployed forces. If soldiers in 3ID ate it or drank it, the odds were the 51st Trans Co hauled it to them. They also executed critical ammunition moves, and in particular they supported a high priority push to the 82d Airborne Division in their bitter fight for As Samawah.

Shortly after the battalion established itself at Dogwood, the S3 moved forward with the 3D COSCOM ACP to the next significant, and eventually permanent, base at Balad South East Airfield about 1.5 hours north of Baghdad. The base was named LSA Anaconda. We coordinated for the rapid establishment of a 1.2 million gallon fuel bag farm, pushed 40 trucks north to Mosul and supported the deployment of the 101st and the reception of the 4th Infantry Division. When the 4ID arrived south of Baghdad on Heavy Equipment Transporters, they were greeted by their divisional Air Defense battalion, and the 181 Trans Bn. We provided rapid refuel for the HETs as they dropped their loads on the northbound lanes, turned through the median, fueled in less than 20 minutes and departed for Kuwait.

Through this entire time, the 181 Trans Bn was still running missions south to pull fuel from the bag farms, supported various 101st Airborne Division FARPs and bag farms, the two corps aviation brigades, the 3ID, and everyone else in V Corps who needed fuel. All told, the battalion transported over 18,000,000 gallons of fuel in those initial months of the war.

May 3 to Current Ops

In early May, the battalion moved to Anaconda, and was dramatically reorganized to become the Corps' primary dry cargo unit. We gave up control of all POL units, and took command and control of 4 PLS companies, 2 medium companies, two light medium companies, one provisional truck unit with 100 Iraqi contracted trucks, one trailer transfer detachment, and the headquarters detachment. At one point our task organization included 15 units and over 1500 soldiers. That eventually dropped to approximately 840 soldiers and 200 Iraqi contract drivers, where it remains today.

All classes of supply going to all the divisions and separates in the Combined Joint Task Force (formerly known as V Corps) are hauled by the 181 Trans. The supplies come to LSA Anaconda, are downloaded in the Corps Distribution Center, and then uploaded on hundreds of 181 Trans trucks. At this point, our fleet of Iraqi trucks has grown to 200, and they are our heavy-lifter, moving tons of cargo to the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, 1st Armor Division, 4th Infantry Division, and 101st Airborne Division. We also

established and ran a daily trailer transfer operation between Kuwait and Anaconda that provided 20 hour delivery from one end to the other. This mission, called SUSTAINER PUSH, operated continuously 29 May - 8 Dec 03.

The 181 Trans Bn has driven over 10,500,000 miles and delivered over 18,000,000 gallons of fuel. Our soldiers endured the brutal heat of the Iraqi summer, and always got the job done despite 160-degree temperatures inside their cabs, constant enemy attacks, and minimal repair part support. All told, they repelled 69 enemy attacks, of which 18 were Improvised Explosive Devices and 31 were small arms engagements resulting in the award of 17 Purple Hearts for combat injuries, with an 18th pending approval. These soldiers have earned their battle-hardened reputation as the best damn transporters in theater, and they continue to make us proud every day. Our soldiers know the routes through the dangerous "Sunni Triangle" better than anyone, and have earned a reputation as soldiers who face danger with courage and lots of firepower. Many times other units come under attack and junior leaders in the 181 Trans provide lifesaving medical evacuations and roadside assistance. When the military police were unwilling to stand and defend a disabled convoy north of Baghdad, a California National Guard NCO seized the key terrain and provided overwatch until the 1st Armored Division could arrive. Their detailed spot reports of enemy activity are unmatched within the COSCOM, and probably throughout the Corps. These soldiers face everything the enemy, the weather and the chain of command throws at them, and they do it with pride and professionalism. They are truly ROAD WARRIORS!

The 181st Transportation Battalion was located in Mannheim, Germany and was the largest truck battalion in the Army. It provided line haul transportation for movement of bulk petroleum products, ammunition, heavy and oversized equipment, major end items, general cargo, and personnel.

The distinctive insignia of the 181st Transportation, an hourglass, symbolizes time and refers to the Battalion's motto: "Any Time, Any Task." The tire stands for the organization's major mission of motor transport. The fleur-de-lis, symbol of France, refers to the unit's initial war service, which was in France during World War II. The colors brick red and gold stand for the Transportation Corps and the color blue for the Battalion's former service as a Quartermaster organization.

In 2007, the 181st provided command and control over the following truck companies:

- 11th Transportation Company (Heavy Equipment Transport) at Turley and Spinelli Barracks, Mannheim
- 515th Transportation Company (POL) at Turley and Spinelli Barracks, Mannheim.
- 41st Transportation Company (PLS) at Rose Barracks, Vilseck.
- 51st Transportation Company (PLS) at Turley Barracks, Mannheim.
- 377th Transportation Company (HET) at the Grafenwoehr Training Area, and Turley and Spinelli Barracks

The 181st Transportation Battalion was inactivated 15 July 2007.

Campaign Participation Credit

World War II: Normandy; Northern France; Rhineland; Ardennes-Alsace; Central Europe

Decorations

Army Superior Unit Award for 1995-1996